



FREDERICK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

January 9, 2019

TITLE: **Mount St Mary's University–Student Venue**

FILE NUMBER: **SP-84-22, AP #18841, (APFO #18842, FRO #18843)**

REQUEST: **Site Development Plan**

The Applicant is requesting Site Development Plan approval for a University facility (5,458 s.f. student venue) on a previously-developed 18.75-acre parcel, adjacent to existing university residence halls.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

LOCATION: Located on the southwestern corner of the intersection of John Walsh Way and Annandale Road, on the campus of Mount St. Mary's University, near Emmitsburg

TAX MAP/PARCEL: Tax Map 8, Parcel 48

COMP. PLAN/LAND USE: Institutional (I)

ZONE: Institutional-Euclidean (Ie)

REGION: Thurmont

WATER/SEWER: M-U (Multi-Use)

APPLICANT/REPRESENTATIVES:

APPLICANT: Mount St. Mary's University

OWNER: - same -

ENGINEER: K&W

ARCHITECT: N/A

ATTORNEY: N/A

STAFF: Denis Superczynski

RECOMMENDATION: Conditional Approval

Attachments:

Exhibit #1 - Site Plan - Rendering

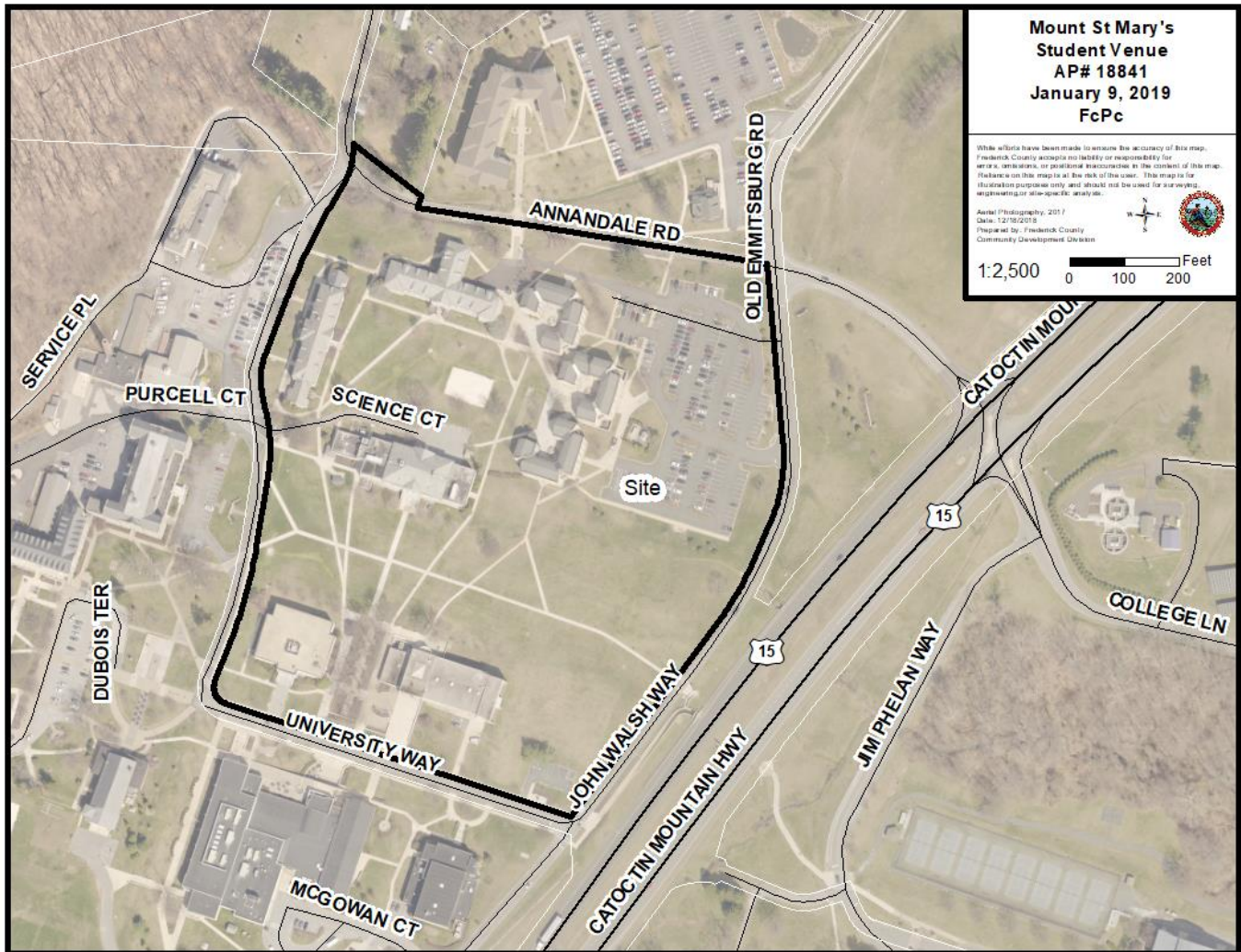
STAFF REPORT

ISSUE

Development Request

The Applicant is requesting Site Development Plan approval for a University facility (5,458 s.f. student venue) on a previously-developed 18.75-acre parcel, adjacent to existing university residence halls. The actual area within the parcel that is the subject of this application is approximately 0.73 acres in size and is primarily occurring on previously developed land that is currently utilized as a paved parking area for students and university personnel. The student venue will expand services to the existing student body and is not directly increasing the student capacity at the school.

The Site of the proposed Facility for Functions is zoned Euclidean Institutional (Ie) and is located on the southwestern corner of John Walsh Way and Annandale Road. Annandale Road is a County roadway, while John Walsh Way is a private street. The proposed facility will result in a net loss of parking spaces in the immediate area, but the proposed student venue building will not generate the need for additional vehicular parking since the campus is developed and planned as an organized unit, relying primarily on an internal pedestrian circulation system to move students from one building to another during the academic year.

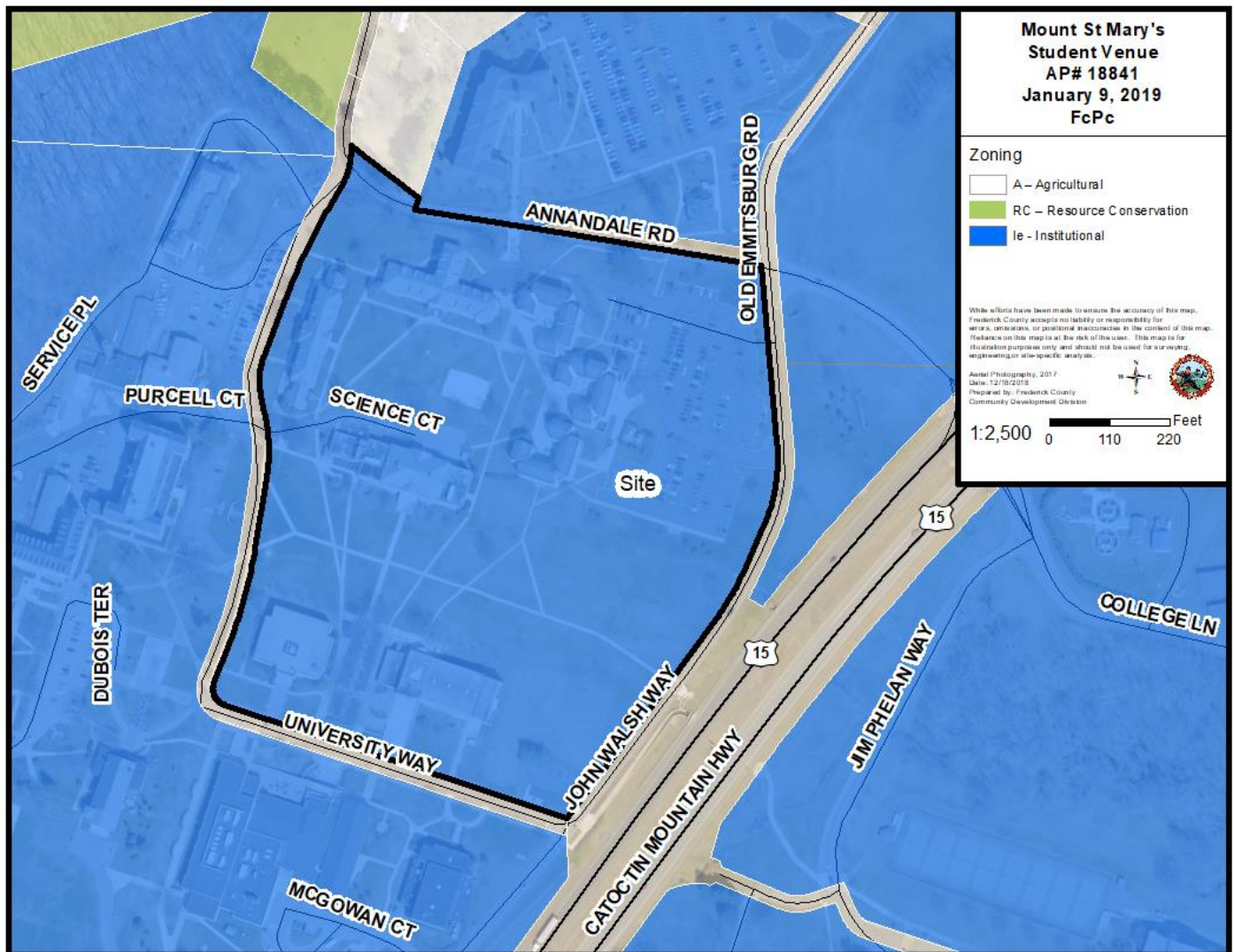


BACKGROUND

Development History

The Mount St. Mary's University campus was established originally in 1808. Although much of the historic main campus was developed prior to Frederick County's modern zoning regulations, several projects in the vicinity of the proposed student venue have been reviewed and approved by County Staff in the past 15 years including site plans for student housing, student center improvements, athletic center development, and a solar energy facility.

The County's Euclidean Institutional zoning district (Ie) was established in 2009, in part, to address the challenges of on-going growth and development at institutional campuses like that of Mount St. Mary's University.



Existing Site Characteristics

The subject Site is located on the north central edge of the 1,400 acre campus. The main activity areas of the campus are located on approximately 325 acres which span US 15. The University is situated on the slope of the eastern side of Catoctin Mountain and is served by an at-grade intersection (Annandale Road extended) that serves both the eastern and western sides of the campus. A pedestrian tunnel under US 15 connects students, faculty, and visitors to athletic facilities on the west side of the highway.

Surrounding land uses include (see Figure 3):

North and South – The proposed Site is surrounded by MSM University campus buildings/facilities on three sides.

West – The area immediately adjacent to the property on the west includes student residence buildings.

East – US 15 is located approximately 350 feet east of the proposed student venue building.



Figure 13 - View of the MSM University Campus (view toward the southwest); US 15 separates East and West campus.

ANALYSIS

Summary of Development Standards Findings and Conclusions

Key issues of the proposed development include:

- Compliance with site plan standards as an integral component of a larger campus
- Providing adequate and safe pedestrian and vehicle access to and within the Site
- Managing functional service connections for solid waste, deliveries, and emergency responders



Figure 4 - Aerial view of the property and surrounding landscape (view toward north).

Detailed Analysis of Findings and Conclusions

The proposed use is being reviewed as a “College or university” as permitted under §1-19-5.310, Use Table, as well as under §1-19-8.480 (Euclidean Institutional standards).

Site Development Plan Approval shall be granted based upon the criteria found in:

Site Development §1-19-3.300.4 (A): Existing and anticipated surrounding land uses have been adequately considered in the design of the development and negative impacts have been minimized through such means as building placement or scale, landscaping, or screening, and an evaluation of lighting. Anticipated surrounding uses shall be determined based upon existing zoning and land use designations.

Findings/Conclusions

1. **Dimensional Requirements/Bulk Standards:** The Zoning Ordinance provides dimensional requirements in the 1e District which are readily satisfied in this Site Plan application since the

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activities are occurring in a relatively limited area of a larger institutional campus parcel. Standards shown below are for the proposed student venue structure.

The Applicant is proposing to meet the established setback requirements generally summarized as follows:

	<u>Required</u>	<u>Provided</u>
Front Yard:	40 ft	> 177 ft
Side Yards:	50 ft	> 410 ft
Rear Yards:	50 ft	> 678 ft
Minimum Lot Area:	n/a	18.75 acres
Minimum Lot Width:	n/a	970 ft
Maximum Building Height (Ie District):	30 ft	
Maximum Building Height Proposed:	28 ft	

The Site Plan is compliant with all dimensional standards in the Zoning Ordinance.

2. **Signage §1-19-6.300:** The Applicant acknowledges signage allocations as follows:

Permitted signage (10 x $\sqrt{50}$ ft): 70'-8" sf

- Maximum sign height: 12 feet
- One sign per street frontage is permitted for institutional uses, however the proposed structure only has frontage along one public street (Annandale Road).

Proposed signage (maximum): Not Provided

The Applicant states that the project will utilize building-mounted signage only. Specific compliance with the sign regulations must be demonstrated prior to signature set submittal by the Applicant.

3. **Landscaping §1-19-6.400:** The Zoning Ordinance requires street trees, buffering of and screening between land uses and parking areas, and parking area plantings to achieve a 20% canopy coverage. The frontage of the portion of the property being reviewed for the proposed uses is approximately 245 feet, which would generate the need for 7 street trees. Four existing deciduous trees are planted within 40 feet of John Walsh Way, while an additional three London plane trees are proposed between the existing parking lot and this same roadway. Staff considers these seven trees to constitute compliance with the street tree standard.

The Applicant proposes the planting of seven (7) London plane trees to meet the parking area landscaping requirement, including the provision to provide at least 20% tree canopy cover over paved parking areas. The proposed plan exceeds this requirement by providing shade canopy over one-third of the parking area (37%). Holly shrubs are proposed across the John Walsh Way edge of the existing parking lot to screen this area from the private road and from US 15. The Applicant has demonstrated care in preserving most of the existing trees on the property through construction of the facility. Improvement plans should provide details as to the protective measures that need to be undertaken to maintain the health of these trees during and after construction of the student venue building.

No vegetative buffering of land uses is required or provided in this site plan.



Staff finds that the landscape plan as presented meets the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

4. **Lighting §1-19-6.500:** Permanent outdoor lighting is provided via building-mounted fixtures as shown on the Photometric Plan. As provided in the Zoning Ordinance, lighting provided for emergency or safety purposes as required by building or electrical code is exempt from ordinance standards. Five building-mounted fixtures are positioned 14 feet above grade with appropriate shielding specified on the lighting sheet. Twelve lighting fixtures are used to illuminate covered walkways and building entrances. These fixtures are mounted less than 8 feet above grade. None of the proposed fixtures will create measurable light at the property boundaries. Parking area lighting is provided via existing pole-mounted lamps.

Staff finds the proposed lighting will be consistent with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Transportation and Parking §1-19-3.300.4 (B): *The transportation system and parking areas are adequate to serve the proposed use in addition to existing uses by providing safe and efficient circulation, and design consideration that maximizes connections with surrounding land uses and accommodates public transit facilities. Evaluation factors include: on-street parking impacts, off-street parking and loading design, access location and design, vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation and safety, and existing or planned transit facilities.*

1. **Access/Circulation:** Vehicular access to the Site is provided via a single existing driveway with an access onto John Walsh Way, located approximately 130 feet east of the building entrance. The location of this existing drive provides a direct access point to the student venue and other surrounding campus structures. Traffic to the building will be diminished significantly by pedestrian trips from students parked elsewhere on campus, or by students not utilizing motor vehicles for daily school-related activities. On-site circulation for automobiles and delivery vehicles is straightforward with the main entrance drive aisle providing access to all parking aisles as well as the service vehicle driveway on the building's north side. Emergency vehicles can easily maneuver within the parking area and can gain clear access to the building if needed in response to an emergency incident.
2. **Parking:** Parking for the proposed student venue is provided in the existing paved parking area which will be reduced in size when a portion of the lot is utilized for the building footprint and associated sidewalks, patios, and landscaped areas. The Mount St. Mary's University campus is currently overparked when calculating the parking space target for the university use.

Parking Requirements

University use

Total Required:

@ 1 space per 4 students (2,131 students) = 533 spaces

Total Provided:

Currently: 2,337 spaces

Post-construction: 2,307 spaces

Net Loss: 30 spaces

Staff has worked with the Applicant to ensure that the parking standards are satisfied – and documented – with this site plan application. The proposed use will not generate the need for additional parking capacity given the campus layout and student mobility behavior.

Loading Requirements

Required - 1 large or 2 small spaces (misc. uses not listed in Section 1-19-6.210(B) > 5,000 sf)

Provided - 2 small spaces (located adjacent to the service entrance on the north side of the student venue)

The location of the proposed loading spaces serves the proposed use and utilizes a short, segregated driveway that leads to a utility entrance. The loading spaces shall remain unmarked, given the nature of the service drive.

4. **Pedestrian Circulation and Safety §1-19-6.220 (G):** Pedestrian access to the proposed facility is ubiquitous and connected functionally in all directions to the campus. Direct sidewalk links to adjacent buildings, as well as to the US 15 pedestrian tunnel, provide excellent connections for students, staff, and visitors travelling on foot.

Staff would prefer to see demarcated pedestrian paths within the parking areas, particularly where walkers must traverse the main drive aisle when moving between the northern parking

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area and the student venue. However, staff has not included a specific condition of approval for such demarcation and leaves this to the discretion of the Planning Commission.

5. **Bicycle Parking §1-19-6.220 (H):** Bicycle parking requirements for a college or university are determined by the Planning Commission “per campus plan”. Lacking a specific campus plan to review for bicycle parking on the Mount St. Mary’s University campus, staff considers the proposed three bicycle racks (6 bicycle parking spaces) to be adequate to meet the zoning ordinance requirement, given the size and projected uses of the student venue building.

Public Utilities §1-19-3.300.4 (C): *Where the proposed development will be served by publicly owned community water and sewer, the facilities shall be adequate to serve the proposed development. Where proposed development will be served by facilities other than publicly owned community water and sewer, the facilities shall meet the requirements of and receive approval from the Maryland Department of the Environment/the Frederick County Health Department.*

Findings/Conclusions

1. **Public Water and Sewer:** The Site is designated ‘Multi-Use’ (M-U) for both public water and public sewer service in the Frederick County Water and Sewer Plan. The Health Department has conditionally approved the proposed Plan. The Site will be served by an on-site community well system and waste treatment facilities approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment. MDE must verify that adequate sewer capacity is available on the existing NPDES permit prior to building permit approvals.

Natural features §1-19-3.300.4 (D): *Natural features of the site have been evaluated and to the greatest extent practical maintained in a natural state and incorporated into the design of the development. Evaluation factors include topography, vegetation, sensitive resources, and natural hazards.*

Findings/Conclusions

1. **Natural Features:** This application is limited to the redevelopment of an existing developed site.

Common Areas §1-19-3.300.4 (E): *If the plan of development includes common areas and/or facilities, the Planning Commission as a condition of approval may review the ownership, use, and maintenance of such lands or property to ensure the preservation of such areas, property, and facilities for their intended purposes.*

Findings/Conclusions

1. **Proposed Common Area/Open Space:** No public common areas are proposed in this Site Plan application.

Other Applicable Regulations

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) – Chapter 1-20

Roads: While this development generates fewer than six new trips during the peak hour of the adjacent street traffic and is exempt from further APFO consideration, non-classroom university amenities are

typically found to be exempt since they are largely occupied by on-campus students who typically bicycle or walk to the site.

Schools: As a non-residential use, the proposed use does not generate any students and is therefore exempt.

Water and Sewer: The Site is designated as M-U, Multi-Use, in the County's Water and Sewer Plan. No connection to a public water or sewer system is proposed.

Forest Resource Ordinance (FRO) – Chapter 1-21

The Applicant has submitted a Combined Preliminary/Final FRO plan. No forest or specimen trees are present within the student venue area, however, an afforestation requirement of 0.05 acres (15%) is required. To satisfy this afforestation requirement, the Applicant will submit a transfer of Forest Banking Credits prior to grading permits or building permits, whichever comes first.

Stormwater Management (SWM) – Chapter 1-15

A Stormwater Management concept plan (AP#18844) has been submitted and reviewed by Staff. Final review will be conducted upon site development plan approval .

Findings/Conclusions

Based upon the review and analysis as provided above, Staff finds that the proposed application meets the Site Plan review criteria as set forth in §1-19-3.300.4 including items related to site development, transportation, parking, public utilities, natural features, and common areas, as well as specific review criteria for uses in the Euclidean Institutional zoning district as set forth in §1-19-8.480. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant as the project moves through the remainder of the development process.

Summary of Agency Comments

<i>Other Agency or Ordinance Requirements</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<i>Development Review Engineering (DRE):</i>	Approved
<i>Development Review Planning:</i>	Conditionally Approved
<i>State Highway Administration (SHA):</i>	Waived
<i>Historic Preservation</i>	Approved
<i>Forest Resource (FRO)</i>	Approved
<i>Health Dept.</i>	Approved
<i>Office of Life Safety</i>	Approved
<i>Street Naming</i>	Approved
<i>DPDR Traffic Engineering</i>	Approved
<i>APFO</i>	Approved

RECOMMENDATION

Staff has no objection to conditional approval of the site development plan for the proposed Mount St. Mary's University Student Venue. If the Planning Commission conditionally approves the plan, the site plan is valid for a period of three (3) years from the date of Planning Commission approval (valid through

January 9, 2022).

Based upon the findings, conclusions, and modifications as presented in the staff report, Staff finds that the application meets or will meet all applicable Zoning, APFO, and FRO requirements once the following modifications are granted and conditions met:

Staff-proposed conditions of approval:

1. Address all agency comments as the plan proceeds through completion.
2. Specific compliance with Zoning Ordinance sign regulations must be demonstrated prior to signature set submittal by the Applicant.
3. Planning Commisison concurrence with the bicycle parking provided to serve the proposed facility.
4. Planning Commission consideration of parking drive aisle pedestrian demarcations to facilitate safe pedestrian crossings within the parking lot.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

MOTION TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

I move that the Planning Commission **APPROVE Site Development Plan SP-84-22** (AP 18841) **with conditions** as listed in the staff report for the proposed **Mount St. Mary's University Student Venue** based on the findings and conclusions of the staff report and the testimony, exhibits, and documentary evidence produced at the public meeting.

JOHN WALSH WAY (PRIVATE)

CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY / U.S. ROUTE 15

COMBINED STORMWATER CONCEPT/STORMWATER DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MOUNT ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY STUDENT VENUE

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